

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 01767 092247Z

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CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 1767

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: KS, PINT

SUBJECT: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY TO OPENHOUSEKEEPING SESSION ON
MARCH 12; ASSEMBLY LEADERSHIP TO RETAIN JOBS

SUMMARY: ALTHOUGH NEGOTIATIONS ON AGENDA ARE STILL UNDERWAY, NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IS TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED FOR TEN-DAY HOUSE-KEEPING SESSSION BEGINNING MARCH 12 WITH AT LEAST TWO DAYS OF INTERPELLATIONS. SESSION WILL BE DEVOTED TO FORMALLY REAPPOINTING ASSEMBLY AND GOVERNMENT PARTY LEADERSHIP AND RESHUFFLING COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN, PASSAGE OF SEVERAL LAWS INCLUDING POSSIBLE STIFF ONE ON DRUG ABUSE, AS WELL AS CONFIRMING NEW PRIME MINISTER, CHOE KYU-HA. AT THIS POINT NO MAJOR CONTROVERSY ANTICIPATED, ALTHOUGH RECENT DEVELOPMENTS GIVE OPPOSITION SEVERAL READY-MADE ISSUES ON WHICH TO CRITICIZE ROKG. SOME PRESS ARTICLES HAVE PLAYED UP "COMPETITION" BETWEEN RULING DRP AND "FRATERNAL" YUCHONGHOE FOR POWER POSITIONS AND IN THEIR EFFORTS TO "SELL" YUSHIN SYSTEM. END SUMMARY.

1. NEGOTIATIONS OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SCHEDULE FOR MARCH 12
SESSION CONTINUED THROUGH WEEKEND OF MARCH 6. GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP IS CALLING FOR TEN DAY SESSION DURING WHICH IT WILL INTRODUCE SEVERAL NEW LAWS, RESERVE TWO DAYS FOR COMMITTEE LEVEL INTERPELLATIONS OF ROKG OFFICIALS IN ADDITION TO CARRYING OUT MAIN
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PAGE 02 SEOUL 01767 092247Z

TASK OF FORMALLY APPOINTING ASSEMBLY AND GOVERNMENT PARTY OFFI-

CIALS AND CONFIRMING PRIME MINISTER AND YUCHONGHOE MEMBERS. NDP IS COUNTER-PROPOSING, WITH LITTLE HOPE OF SUCCESS, TWENTY-DAY SESSION WITH SIX OR SEVEN DAYS OF INTERPELLATIONS.

2. PRINCIPLE ACTION AT FORTHCOMING SESSION WILL BE REAPPOINTMENT ASSEMBLY AND GOVERNMENT PARTY LEADERSHIP. ON MARCH 9, DRP AND YUCHONGHOE SPOKESMEN ANNOUNCED THAT KEY ASSEMBLY AND PARTY LEADERSHIP POSITIONS WOULD REMAIN UNCHANGED WITH EXCEPTION OF VICE SPEAKERS AND STANDING COMMITTEES WHERE ELEVEN OF THIRTEEN CHAIRMEN WILL BE REPLACED. NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SPEAKER CHONG IL-KWON AND ACTING DRP CHAIRMAN YI HYU-SANG WILL CONTINUE AS BEFORE WITH YUCHONGHOE'S NUMBER TWO MAN, KU TAE-HOE, FILLING DEPOSED NIM CHIN-MAN'S SLOT AS ONE OF TWO VICE SPEAKERS. PAK CHUN-KYU WILL REMAIN AS DRP POLICY CHAIRMAN, KIL CHON-SIK WILL CONTINUE AS DRP SECRETARY GENERAL, AND KIM YONG-TAE WILL SERVE AGAIN AS DRP FLOOR LEADER. EIGHT OF ELEVEN NEW COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN WERE SELECTED FROM DRP RANKS AND THREE FROM YUCHONGHOE; ALL CHAIRMEN ARE PROFESSIONAL POLITICIANS WHO HAVE SERVED AT LEAST TWO TERMS IN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. NONE CAN BE CALLED A NEW FACE BUT MOST WILL ASSUME THEIR SPECIFIC CHAIRMANSHIPS FOR THE FIRST TIME. TWO CHAIRMEN RETAINED ARE CHOE YONG-HUI, DEFENSE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN IN LAST ASSEMBLY, WHO NOW WILL ASSUME CHAIRMANSHIP OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, AND KO CHAE-PIL, WHO AFTER TAKING GOVERNMENT POST FOR SHORT TIME, IS NOW ONCE AGAIN CONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN. KOREA HERALD'S REPRESENTATIVE COMMENT ON ENTIRE SLATE OF APPOINTMENTS IS THAT RELATIVELY MINOR SHUFFLE IS INDICATIVE OF ESSENTIAL STABILITY OF YUSHIN SYSTEM AND THAT NO NEW FACES WERE NEEDED THIS TIME. PRESS HAS ALSO NOTED IN PASSING THAT FORMER PRIME MINISTER KIM CHONG-PIL WAS NOT GIVEN AN IMPORTANT POSITION AS SOME HAD SPECULATED. HE RETAINS HIS YUCHONGHOE ASSEMBLY SEAT HOWEVER.

3. ONLY SIGNIFICANT OPPOSITION APPOINTMENT LIKELY TO BE MADE DURING SESSION IS NDP VICE-SPEAKER TO REPLACE YI CHOL-SUNG. NDP LEADER KIM YONG-SAM HAS NOT YET PLAYED THIS IMPORTANT CARD IN OPPOSITION FACTIONAL STRUGGLE, AND, IN FACT, THERE HAS BEEN SPECULATION THAT HE MAY DELAY NAMING VICE-SPEAKER UNTIL PARTY CONVENTION IN MAY. SPEAKER TOLD AMBASSADOR, HOWEVER, THAT FORMER FLOOR LEADER AND INFLUENTIAL PARTY BOSS YI MIN-U IS LEADING CANDIDATE TO ASSUME POST DURING COMING SESSION AND THIS HAS CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SEOUL 01767 092247Z

ALSO BEEN SPECULATED IN PRESS.

4. MAIN CURRENT POINT OF CONTENTION OVER ASSMEBLY SESSION IS PLENARY LEVEL INTERPELLATION. NDP CITES PRECEDENT IN DEMANDING INTERPELLATION OF NEW PRIME MINISTER ON FULL RANGE OF TOPICS. ACCORDING TO NDP FLOOR LEADER, GOVERNMENT CLAIMS THAT IN "NEW ASSEMBLY" FOCUS WILL BE ON COMMITTEE SESSIONS RATHER THAN MORE VISIBLE PLENARY SESSION. SPEAKER'S SECRETARY TOLD EMBOFF

THAT GOVERNMENT ANTICIPATES OPPOSITION QUESTIONS ON MARCH 1 MYONGDONG "DECLARATION FOR DEMOCRACY" AND UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR REAPPOINTMENT LISTS. HE SAID PRIVATELY THAT DRP IS WORRIED THAT NEW PRIME MINISTER MAY NOT BE ABLE TO ANSWER SMOOTHLY TOUGH OPPOSITION QUESTIONS. NDP ASSEMBLYMAN TOLD EMBOFF THAT IN ADDITION TO MYONGDONG AND UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR QUESTIONS, OPPOSITION MAY ASK ABOUT POSSIBLE ROKG INVOLVEMENT IN LOCKHEED SCANDAL.

5. PRESS HAS BEEN HIGHLIGHTING TWO MAJOR LAW BILLS SCHEDULED TO BE CONSIDERED DURING THIS SPECIAL SESSION. ONE IS LAW TO PROMOTE SAVINGS BY LOW INCOME INDIVIDUALS. SECOND, AND POSSIBLY MORE CONTROVERSIAL, IS PROPOSAL TO INFLICT DEATH PENALTY ON MARIJUANA PUSHERS AND UP TO TEN YEARS HARD LABOR FOR SMOKERS.

6. ROKG WAS WELL-SATISFIED WITH RECORD AND PERFORMANCE OF LAST FALL'S NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SESSION, AND REAPPOINTMENT OF GOVERNMENT PARTY LEADERSHIP IS REFLECTION OF THIS. AT SAME TIME GOVERNMENT IS AWARE AS SOME ASSEMBLYMEN THEMSELVES HAVE OPINED, THAT ASSEMBLY SEEMS MORE AND MORE IN PUBLIC EYE TO HAVE BECOME EXTENSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH. NEW COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN PROBABLY DESIGNED TO BRING SOME NEW PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE AND LIFE TO THE FORE. TO PUMP ADDED LIFE INTO ASSEMBLY AND MAKE IT MORE USEFUL, GOVERNMENT ALSO APPEARS TO BE INTRODUCING ELEMENT OF COMPETITION BETWEEN GOVERNMENT PARTIES. PRESS HAS BEEN SPECULATING WHETHER PRESIDENTIALLY APPOINTED YUCHONGHOE WILL NOW OVERSHADOW DRP'S ELECTIVE MEMBERS. WHILE SEVERAL DRP OFFICIALS TOLD EMBOFF POSSIBILITY WAS "RIDICULOUS", SOME DO ACKNOWLEDGE THEY MUST NOW COMPETE WITH YUCHONGHOE IN "SALE" OF YISHIN SYSTEM TO PUBLIC. THUS, WHILE DRP CLEARLY DID WELL IN RETAINING MAJORITY OF COMMITTEE CHAIRMANSIPS IT DID NOT ESCAPE DRP MEMBERS' NOTICE WHEN IN OCTOBER, IN MOST RECENT OF SEVERAL RIFS, 97 OF DRP'S ADMINISTRATIVE EMPLOYEES WERE DISMISSED, CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 SEOUL 01767 092247Z

LEAVING THREE HUNDRED TO MAN CITY AND PROVINCIAL POSTS.

7. IN SUM, WE ANTICIPATE ASSEMBLY SESSION WILL BE PATTERNED AFTER LAST FALL'S SESSION WITH GOVERNMENT ATTEMPTING AS FAR AS POSSIBLE TO DOWNPLAY CONTROVERSY, AND TO LIMIT SPECIAL SESSION TO FORMAL ELECTIONS OF OFFICERS AND PASSAGE OF SEVERAL FAIRLY SIGNIFICANT LAWS. AS FOR OPPOSITION, CONSTRAINTS OF EMERGENCY MEASURE NINE AND LAST FALL'S EXAMPLE OF KIM OK-SON'S EXPULSION FROM ASSEMBLY SHOULD ACT TO MODERATE ITS ANTI-GOVERNMENT STATEMENTS AND ENCOURAGE IT TO PLAY BALL. HOWEVER, RECENT "MYONGDONG" ARRESTS, REAPPOINTMENT OF PROFESSORS, LOCKHEED SCANDAL AND ROKG/US CONGRESSIONAL BRIBERY ALLEGATIONS CONSTITUTE READY-MADE ISSUES FOR OPPOSITION ASSEMBLYMEN TRYING TO LIGHT SPARK BEFORE MAY PARTY CONVENTION, AND WE WOULD EXPECT AT LEAST SOME SHARP WORDS BEFORE SESSION IS OVER.

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